Montana Crop & Livestock Reporter

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HIGHLIGHTS:

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2006 Prospective Plantings

Montana **spring wheat** producers expect to seed 3.05 million acres in 2006, up 17 percent from last year, Montana Field Office. If realized, this would be the largest spring wheat acreage since 2002 when 3.75 million acres were planted. Improved soil moisture conditions compared to last year and shifting of acreage from durum and winter wheat are contributing to the higher spring wheat planting intentions. Producers are expecting to plant 450,000 acres of **durum wheat** this spring, down 24 percent from last year. **Winter wheat** seedings, at 2.0 million acres, are unchanged from the December estimate, but are down 7 percent from last year. Winter wheat conditions at the end of March 2006 were up slightly from a year ago with conditions rated 1 percent very poor, 10 percent poor, 43 percent fair, 39 percent good, and 7 percent excellent. Adding the winter wheat seeded last fall to the other spring and durum wheat intended seedings totals 5.5 million acres of **all wheat** to be planted for the 2006 season, up 3 percent from 2005.

Montana **barley** producers intend to plant an estimated 800,000 acres, down 11 percent from the previous year and would be the lowest since 1953. The intended seeded acreage for **oats** is expected to be 75,000 acres, down 15,000 acres from the previous year and the lowest acreage since 1889. **Corn** growers intend to plant 60,000 acres, down 5,000 acres from last year. Acreage of **sugar beets** is intended to be 52,600 acres, down 2 percent from 2005. The area planted to **dry beans** is expected to be 18,000 acres, unchanged from last year. **Hay** growers are expected to harvest 2.9 million acres, down 3 percent from last year's record high acreage.

Montana **canola** producers intend to plant 16,000 acres in 2006, down 1,000 acres from 2005. **Flaxseed** producers intend to plant 45,000 acres in 2006, down 10,000 acres from last year.

In the United States, **all wheat** planted area is expected to total 57.1 million acres, down slightly from 2005. If realized, this will be the lowest all wheat acreage since 1972. **Winter wheat** planted area for the 2006 crop is 41.4 million acres, up 2 percent from last year. Of the total, about 29.8 million acres are Hard Red Winter, 7.42 million acres are Soft Red Winter, and 4.22 million acres are White Winter. The 2006 **other spring** wheat planted acreage is expected to total 13.9 million, down 1 percent from 2005. Of the total, about 13.2 million acres are Hard Red Spring wheat. Intended **durum wheat** planted area is 1.83 million acres, down 34 percent from the previous year. If realized, this will be the lowest durum wheat acreage since 1961.

Barley growers in the U.S. intend to plant 3.67 million acres for 2006, down 5 percent from last year. If realized, this will be the lowest barley planted acreage on record. U.S. **oats** acres seeded and to be seeded for the 2006 crop year are expected to total 4.32 million acres, up 2 percent from last year's planted area. Area planted to oats is expected to increase or remain unchanged in 18 States, including most States across the central Corn Belt and Great Plains.

Sugar beets area planted for the 2006 crop year in the United States is expected to total 1.37 million acres, 6 percent higher than the 2005 planted acreage. (continued on the back page.)

The Montana 2006 prospective plantings and grain stocks estimates in this issue are the result of surveying approximately 2,500 Montana farmers in March. SPECIAL THANKS to those operators that were interviewed and responded to the survey.

Planted Acreage, 2004-2005 and Intended 2006 Montana and United States

	Montana				United States			
	2004	2005	2006	2006/2005	2004	2005	2006	2006/2005
	Thousand Acres			Percent	Thousand Acres			Percent
All Wheat	5,470	5,340	5,500	103	59,674	57,229	57,128	100
Winter Wheat	1,900	2,150	2,000	93	43,350	40,433	41,404	102
Durum Wheat	570	590	450	76	2,561	2,760	1,825	66
Other Spring Wheat	3,000	2,600	3,050	117	13,763	14,036	13,899	99
Barley	1,000	900	800	89	4,527	3,875	3,667	95
Oats	105	90	75	83	4,085	4,246	4,324	102
Corn	70	65	60	92	80,929	81,759	78,019	95
Sugar Beets	53.7	53.9	52.6	98	1,345.6	1,294.8	1,371.8	106
All Dry Beans	13	18	18	100	1,354.3	1,665.0	1,710.3	103
All Hay Harvested	2,500	3,000	2,900	97	61,966	61,649	61,478	100
Canola	15	17	16	94	865	1,159	923	80
Flaxseed	20	55	45	82	523	983	890	91

March 1, 2006 Grain Stocks

All wheat stocks in Montana on March 1, 2006 were 85.2 million bushels, down 4 percent from March 1, 2005. All wheat stocks stored on the farms amounted to 60.0 million bushels, down 10 percent from a year ago. All wheat stored off farms amounted to 25.2 million bushels, up 16 percent from a year ago. All wheat disappearance for the December 2005-February 2006 quarter was up 30 percent from the same quarter last year to 66.4 million bushels, compared with 51.0 million bushels a year ago.

Barley stocks in all positions on March 1, 2006 were 27.5 million bushels, up 5 percent from a year ago. Barley stored on farms was 17.0 million bushels, up 3 percent from last year. Off-farm barley storage was up 9 percent from a year ago to 10.5 million bushels. All barley disappearance during the December 2005-February 2006 quarter was down 16 percent from the same quarter a year ago to 10.2 million bushels, compared with 12.2 million bushels a year ago. **Oat** stocks in all positions were estimated at 1.4 million bushels, down 9 percent from last year. On-farm oat stocks were 1.3 million bushels, down 7 percent from 1.4 million bushels stored a year ago. Oats stored off farm were down 32 percent from last year to 75,000 bushels.

In the United States, all wheat stored in all positions on March 1, 2006 totaled 972 million bushels, down 1 percent from a year ago. On-farm stocks are estimated at 256 million bushels, down 16 percent from last March. Off-farm stocks, at 716 million bushels, are up 5 percent from a year ago. The December 2005 - February 2006 indicated disappearance is 457 million bushels, up 3 percent from the same period a year earlier.

Durum wheat stocks in all positions in the U.S. on March 1, 2006 totaled 65.6 million bushels, up 18 percent from a year ago. On-farm stocks, at 39.5 million bushels, are up 12 percent from March 1, 2005. Off-farm stocks totaled 26.1 million bushels, up 27 percent from a year ago. The December 2005 - February 2006 indicated disappearance of 16.5 million bushels is down 28 percent from the same period a year earlier.

U.S. barley stocks in all positions on March 1, 2006 totaled 167 million bushels, down 13 percent from March 1, 2005. On-farm stocks are estimated at 68.4 million bushels, 14 percent below a year ago. Off-farm stocks, at 98.2 million bushels, are 12 percent below March 2005. The December 2005 - February 2006 indicated disappearance totaled 41.4 million bushels, 25 percent below the same period a year earlier.

U.S. oats stored in all positions on March 1, 2006 totaled 74.7 million bushels, 9 percent below the stocks on March 1, 2005. Of the total stocks on hand, 41.9 million bushels are stored on farms, down 4 percent from a year ago. Off-farm stocks totaled 32.8 million bushels, down 16 percent from the previous year. Indicated disappearance during December 2005 - February 2006 totaled 21.0 million bushels, down 7 percent from the same period a year ago.

U.S. corn stocks in all positions on March 1, 2006 totaled 6.99 billion bushels, up 3 percent from March 1, 2005. Of the total stocks, 4.06 billion bushels are stored on farms, down 2 percent from a year earlier. Off-farm stocks, at 2.93 billion bushels, are up 12 percent from a year ago. The December 2005 - February 2006 indicated disappearance is 2.83 billion bushels, compared with 2.70 billion bushels during the same period last year.

March 1 Grain Stocks

GRAIN and POSITION	MONTANA				UNITED STATES		
	Mar. 1, 2005	Dec. 1, 2005	Mar. 1, 2006	'06/'05	Mar. 1, 2005	Dec. 1, 2005*	Mar. 1, 2006
	Thousand Bushels			Percent	Thousand Bushels		
ALL WHEAT							
On Farms	67,000	129,000	60,000	90%	304,710	513,010	256,000
Off Farms 1/	21,630	22,590	25,150	116%	679,681	916,414	716,240
TOTAL	88,630	151,590	85,150	96%	984,391	1,429,424	972,240
DURUM WHEAT 2/, 3/							
On Farms	--	--	--	--	35,200	57,700	39,500
Off Farms 1/	--	--	--	--	20,496	24,384	26,131
TOTAL	--	--	--	--	55,696	82,084	65,631
BARLEY							
On Farms	16,500	28,000	17,000	103%	79,680	103,650	68,400
Off Farms 1/	9,620	9,670	10,460	109%	111,001	104,335	98,164
TOTAL	26,120	37,670	27,460	105%	190,681	207,985	166,564
OATS							
On Farms	1,400	1,900	1,300	93%	43,500	60,100	41,900
Off Farms 1/	110	70	75	68%	38,946	35,617	32,812
TOTAL	1,510	1,970	1,375	91%	82,446	95,717	74,712
CORN 3/							
On Farms	--	--	--	--	4,137,000	6,325,000	4,055,000
Off Farms 1/	--	--	--	--	2,619,334	3,489,957	2,932,178
TOTAL	--	--	--	--	6,756,334	9,814,957	6,987,178

1/ Terminals, mills, interior elevators. 2/ Included in all wheat. 3/ Not included in order to avoid disclosing individual operations.
*Revised.

February 2006 Ag Prices Received

February 2006 full month crop prices were mostly higher when compared with January 2005. Montana's winter wheat average price was $3.57 per bushel, up $0.16 from the previous month; spring wheat prices increased $0.06 to $3.78 per bushel; but durum wheat prices decreased $0.08 to $3.25 per bushel. Feed barley prices increased $0.03 from the previous month to $1.72, but malt barley prices decreased $0.04 to $2.89 per bushel.

The mid-March price for alfalfa hay rose $3.00 to $67.00 per ton, but all other hay dropped $4.00 to $56.00 per ton. Mid-March grain prices were higher than the previous month with the winter wheat price at $3.76 per bushel, spring wheat was $3.85 per bushel, durum wheat was $3.34 per bushel, malt barley was $3.05 per bushel; and feed barley was $1.77 per bushel.

Livestock prices for the full month of February were mixed compared to the previous month. Steer and heifer prices decreased $1.00 to $118.00 per cwt, while cows increased $1.70 to $52.60. The price for calves was up $2.00 to $150.00 per cwt. Sheep prices dropped $5.10 to $38.10 per cwt and lamb prices decreased $1.00 to $104.00 per cwt. Milk prices decreased $0.50 per cwt from last month to $14.10 per cwt. Steer and heifer prices for mid-March were $116.00 per cwt; cows averaged $52.30 per cwt; calves averaged $143.00 per cwt; and milk prices averaged $14.50 per cwt.

Nationally, prices for February and changes from January were as follows: winter wheat was $3.59, up $0.14; spring wheat was $3.83, up $0.14; durum wheat was $3.35, up $0.06; the all barley price was $2.57, up $0.10; steer and heifer prices were $97.80, down $4.20; cows were $49.70, up $2.40; calves were $142.00, up $1.00; sheep were $46.00, down $1.70; and lambs were $96.80, up $0.70.

The U.S. mid-March winter wheat price was $3.67 per bushel, spring wheat was $3.83 per bushel, durum wheat was $3.32 per bushel, all wheat was $3.71 per bushel, malt barley was $2.79 per bushel, feed barley was $1.85 per bushel, and all barley was $2.55. Steer and heifer prices were $94.10 per cwt, cow prices were $49.90 per cwt, calves were $138.00 per cwt, all hog prices were $42.40 per cwt, and all egg prices were $0.66 per dozen.

Preliminary All Farm Products Index is down 6 points (5.0 percent) from March 2005. The Food Commodities Index, at 116, decreased 1 point (0.9 percent) from last month and 7 points (5.7 percent) from March 2005.

United States Index Summary

INDEX (1990-92=100)	February 2006	March 2005	February 2006	March 2006
Prices Received	114	119	114	113
Prices Paid, Interest, Taxes, & Farm Wage Rages 1/	137	139	145	144
Ratio 2/	83	86	79	78

1/ Prices paid indexes (1990-92=100) published monthly. 2/ Ratio of index of prices received by farmers to index of prices paid.

Montana Average Farm Prices Received

Commodity	UNIT	Monthly Average				Change From Previous		Mid-Month Average	
		Montana			U.S.	Month	Year	Montana	U.S.
		Feb. 2005	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2006	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005	March 15, 2006	March 15, 2006
		Dollars							
Winter Wheat	Bu.	3.39	3.41	3.57	3.59	+0.16	+0.18	3.76	3.67
Durum Wheat	Bu.	3.76	3.33	3.25	3.35	-0.08	-0.51	3.34	3.32
Spring Wheat	Bu.	3.77	3.72	3.78	3.83	+0.06	+0.01	3.85	3.83
All Wheat	Bu.	3.61	3.53	3.62	3.66	+0.09	+0.01	3.75	3.71
Barley, All	Bu.	2.77	2.60	2.74	2.57	+0.14	-0.03	2.88	2.55
Feed Barley	Bu.	1.61	1.69	1.72	1.83	+0.03	+0.11	1.77	1.85
Malt Barley	Bu.	3.13	2.93	2.89	2.77	-0.04	-0.24	3.05	2.79
Oats	Bu.	na	na	1.62	1.82	na	na	na	1.77
Alfalfa Hay	Ton	74.00	62.00	64.00	99.20	+2.00	-10.00	67.00	100.00
All Other Hay	Ton	66.00	62.00	60.00	83.20	-2.00	-6.00	56.00	86.60
All Hay Baled	Ton	72.00	62.00	63.00	95.00	+1.00	-9.00	66.00	97.10
Steers & Heifers	Cwt	106.00	119.00	118.00	97.80	-1.00	+12.00	116.00	94.10
Cows	Cwt	54.40	50.90	52.60	49.70	+1.70	-1.80	52.30	49.90
Beef Cattle 1/	Cwt	93.60	101.00	102.00	92.40	+1.00	+8.40	97.50	89.20
Calves	Cwt	127.00	148.00	150.00	142.00	+2.00	+23.00	143.00	138.00
Sheep 2/	Cwt	52.90	43.20	38.10	46.00	-5.10	-14.80	na	na
Lambs 2/	Cwt	132.00	105.00	104.00	96.80	-1.00	-28.00	na	na
All Milk	Cwt	16.00	14.60	14.10	13.50	-0.50	-1.90	14.50	12.80

1/ Composite of steers, heifers, and cows. 2/ Mid-month prices for sheep and lambs discontinued. na-not available.

2006 Prospective Plantings (continued from front page)

U.S. producers expect to harvest 61.5 million acres of **all hay** in 2006, down fractionally from 2005. With the exception of Oklahoma, harvested acres are expected to decline or remain unchanged from last year throughout the Great Plains and adjacent areas of the Corn Belt. The States with the largest decrease in harvested area are North Dakota and Texas, with expected declines of 430,000 and 350,000 acres, respectively, from 2005.

Dry beans prospective 2006 planting in the U.S. totals 1.71 million acres, up 3 percent from last year and 26 percent above 2 years ago. The increase in planted acres can be contributed in part to higher demand for chickpeas and lower prices for crops farmers could plant instead of dry beans. Six States expect to plant more dry bean acres than a year ago, 4 States expect planted acres to be unchanged, while acreage in 8 States is expected to be down from 2005.

U.S. producers intend to plant 923,000 acres of **canola** in 2006, down 20 percent from 2005 but up 7 percent from 2004. **Flaxseed** producers in the U.S. expect to plant 890,000 acres in 2006, down 9 percent from last year's total of 983,000 acres. Planting intentions are down in all 4 States in the estimating program (Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota).

U.S. Hog Inventory Up 1 Percent

U.S. inventory of all hogs and pigs on March 1, 2006 was 60.1 million head. This was up 1 percent from March 1, 2005, but down 2 percent from December 1, 2005.

Breeding inventory, at 6.03 million head, was up 1 percent from last year and up slightly from the previous quarter. Market hog inventory, at 54.1 million head, was up 1 percent from last year but down 2 percent from last quarter.

The December 2005-February 2006 pig crop, at 25.7 million head, up 1 percent from 2005 and up 2 percent from 2004. Sows farrowing during this period totaled 2.84 million head, up slightly from both 2004 and 2005. The sows farrowed during this quarter represented 47 percent of the breeding herd. The average pigs saved per litter was 9.03 for the December 2005-February 2006 period, compared to 8.94 last year. Pigs saved per litter by size of operation ranged from 7.50 for operations with 1-99 hogs and pigs to 9.10 for operations with more than 5,000 hogs and pigs.

U.S. hog producers intend to have 2.90 million sows farrow during the March-May 2006 quarter, up 1 percent from the actual farrowings during the same period in both 2004 and 2005. Intended farrowings for June-August 2006, at 2.92 million sows, are up slightly from 2005 and up 1 percent from 2004.

The total number of hogs under contract, owned by operations with over 5,000 head, but raised by contractees, accounted for 39 percent of the total U.S. hog inventory, unchanged from last year.

COMING IN NEXT REPORTER

- Montana's Rank
- Potato Stocks
- Quarterly Milk Production
- Cattle on Feed
- Specialty Crops County Estimates
- Red Meat Production
- Egg Production

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